Categorical Age – Reference Guide
Version 1.0, December 1999

Summary: Categorical Age

Definition

Categorical Age (age group) in which a person is included.

Data Storage and Field Values

There is 1 data element used to define the data concept Categorical Age (age group). The variable name noted below specifically applies to the Categorical Age of the subject of the report, time not specified. Variable names for other uses of Categorical Age, such as Categorical Age of the subject's partner, or Categorical Age of the subject at time of diagnosis or at time of initiation of behavior, are not discussed in this document but will be discussed in subsequent releases.

Variable Name:	AGECAT
Type:	character
Length:	5
Reported to CDC:	Yes
Field Values:	Refer to the table below

Code	Description	Code	Description
' 1* '	Less than 1 year	'45-49'	45 - 49 years
' 1-4'	1- 4 years	'50-54'	50 - 54 years
' 5-9'	5 -9 years	'55-59'	55 - 59 years
'10-14'	10 - 14 years	'60-64'	60 - 64 years
'15-19'	15 - 19 years	'65-69'	65 - 69 years
'20-24'	20 - 24 years	'70-74'	70 - 74 years
'25-29'	25 - 29 years	'75-79'	75 - 79 years
'30-34'	30 - 34 years	'80-84'	80 - 84 years
'35-39'	35 - 39 years	'85-89'	85 - 89 years
'40-44'	40 - 44 years	'90+ '	90+ years

Missing Values

If the value of the Categorical Age data element is missing, or does not adhere to the CIPHER standard, the data element may be noted as blank to indicate a missing value. If the program requires the reason the value is missing, a separate 1-character field should be used to note the reason for the missing data. The use of a Missing Value Reason data element must adhere to the CIPHER definition and rules associated with missing data as described in Appendix I - Missing Value Reason.

Processing Overview

Special requirements apply. Refer to the Implementation subsection on Data Processing: Validations and Edit Checks, below, for detailed information.

EDI Summary

Note: EDI sections are under construction.

Discussion

The Categorical Age data element is defined and structured to provide a default standard Categorical Age set consistent with grouping methods supported by the Census Bureau. CIPHER agreed to define a default standard Categorical Age based in units of years, because "years" is one of the most common units supported by various programs. The Categorical Age definition applies to both stated age data elements and calculated age data elements. In addition, CIPHER supports the use of an asterisk (*) in the Categorical Age code set to reflect "less than". For example, ' 1* ' indicates an age of less than 1 year.

In addition to the need to support this basic age group standard, CIPHER supports the concept of allowing for flexibility in age group codings both at collection time (data input) and at analysis time (data output). Such flexibility is beneficial to those programs that require slightly different groupings based on their particular needs. For programs that are particularly sensitive to confidentiality issues, which may arise with small cell counts, this flexibility also offers some options on different, and in this case, larger and "less identifiable" groupings.

With that, CIPHER agreed to support program-defined age group categories that are expansions or collapsings of the CIPHER default age group categories, as long as the groups do not cross the CIPHER standard groupings. Thus, for example, an age group category of **' 1*-9'** would be acceptable because it is an expanded category which represents the first three CIPHER default standard groupings of **' 1* '**, **' 1-4'**, and **' 5-9'**.   However, an age group category of **' 4-6'** is not acceptable because this group crosses the boundaries of the CIPHER default groupings **' 1-4'**, and **' 5-9'** .

Programs can also choose categories that subdivide the CIPHER-supplied categories even further. For example, a program may wish to define categories **' 0-3 mos.'**, **' 4-6 mos.'**, **' 7-9 mos.'**, and **'10-11 mos.'** , all of which can be aggregated into the larger CIPHER-defined category of **' 1* '**.

Because CIPHER focuses on report, collection, and presentation, the importance of providing flexibility was acknowledged. Allowing programs to expand or collapse the CIPHER-defined categories without spanning those categories provides flexibility in both input and output of data, while ensuring consistency in interpretation and view of age groupings.

Implementation: Categorical Age

The implementation examples noted below specifically apply to the Categorical Age of the subject of the report, time not specified. The implementation for other uses of Categorical Age, such as Categorical Age of the subject's partner, or Categorical Age of the subject at time of diagnosis or at time of initiation of behavior, can be patterned after these implementation examples.

Data Collection: Hardcopy Report Form

Check-box fields on the hardcopy report form are used for the collection of Categorical Age data. The reporter can check or mark the box noting the appropriate category. Refer to Figures 1 and 2 below.

As discussed in the Summary section, CIPHER supports the concept of allowing for flexibility in age group codings during both collection (data input) and analysis (data output). Therefore, CIPHER supports program-defined age group categories that reflect an expansion or a collapsing of the CIPHER default age group categories, with the understanding that the groups are not to span the CIPHER standard groupings. Refer to Figure 3 for an illustration of a hardcopy report form containing categories that reflect an expansion of the CIPHER default age group categories.

Figure 1:   **Blank Hardcopy Form section used to collect Categorical Age**

Categorical Age
(select one)

☐	' 1* ' - Less than 1 year	☐	'45-49' - 45 - 49 Years
☐	'1-4' - 1 - 4 Years	☐	'50-54' - 50 - 54 Years
☐	'5-9' - 5 - 9 Years	☐	'50-59' - 55 - 59 Years
☐	'10-14' - 10-14 Years	☐	'60-64' - 60 - 64 Years
☐	'15-19' - 15 - 19 Years	☐	'65-69' - 65 - 69 Years
☐	'20-24' - 20 - 24 Years	☐	'70-74' - 70 - 74 Years
☐	'25-29' - 25 - 29 Years	☐	'75-79' - 75 - 79 Years
☐	'30-34' - 30 - 34 Years	☐	'80-84' - 80 - 84 Years
☐	'35-39' - 35-39 Years	☐	'85-89' - 85 - 89 Years
☐	'40-44' - 40-44 Years	☐	'90+' - 90+ Years

Figure 2:   **Completed Hardcopy Form section used to collect Categorical Age**

Categorical Age
(select one)

☐	' 1* ' - Less than 1 year	☐	'45-49' - 45 - 49 Years
☐	'1-4' - 1 - 4 Years	☐	'50-54' - 50 - 54 Years
☐	'5-9' - 5 - 9 Years	☐	'50-59' - 55 - 59 Years
☐	'10-14' - 10-14 Years	☐	'60-64' - 60 - 64 Years
☐	'15-19' - 15 - 19 Years	☐	'65-69' - 65 - 69 Years
☐	'20-24' - 20 - 24 Years	☐	'70-74' - 70 - 74 Years
☐	'25-29' - 25 - 29 Years	☐	'75-79' - 75 - 79 Years
☐	'30-34' - 30 - 34 Years	☐	'80-84' - 80 - 84 Years
✓	'35-39' - 35-39 Years	☐	'85-89' - 85 - 89 Years
☐	'40-44' - 40-44 Years	☐	'90+' - 90+ Years

Figure 3:   **Completed Hardcopy Form section used to collect Categorical Age with categories that reflect an expansion of the CIPHER default age group categories.**

This example illustrates CIPHER's flexibility in allowing the use of alternate categories which reflect an expansion of the standard CIPHER categories (category 1*-9 is an expanded category that represents the first three CIPHER default standard groupings).

Categorical Age
(select one)

☐   **' 1*-9' - Less than 1 year through 9 years**

☐   **'10-14' - 10 -14 Years**

☐   **'15-24' - 15 - 24 Years**

☐   **'25-29' - 25 - 29 Years**

☐   **'30-39' - 30 - 39 Years**

☐   **'40-49' - 40 - 49 Years**

☐   **'50-59' - 50 - 59 Years**

☐   **'60-69' - 60 - 69 Years**

☐   **'70+' - 70+ Years**

Missing Values – Hardcopy Form

Examples of hardcopy forms using the associated Missing Value Reason data element can be found in Appendix I – Missing Value Reason. The hardcopy form need only contain a missing value reason if the program requires the rationale for a missing value for Categorical Age.
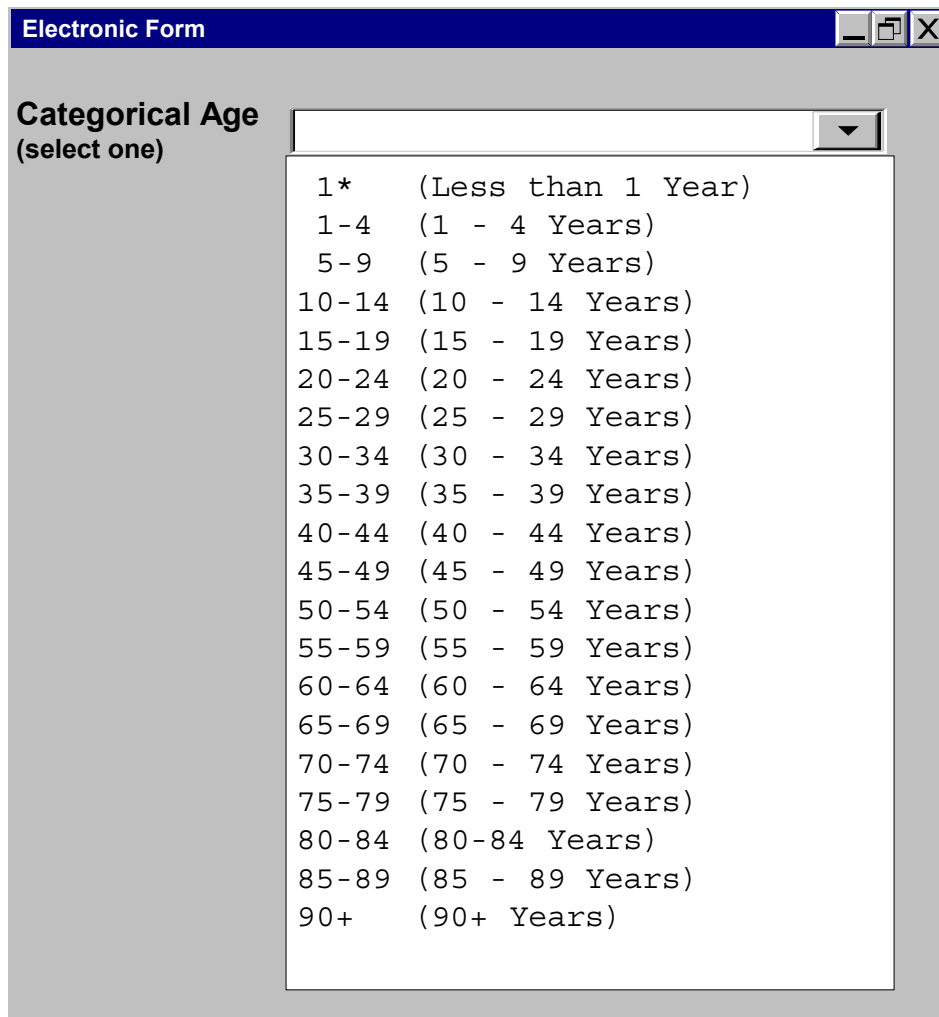
Data Entry: Electronic Forms

A pull-down menu displays the valid entry options, which parallel the options noted on the collection report form as shown in Figures 4 through 7 below. The portion of the valid entry options outside the parentheses reflects the data that are stored.

Figure 4:   **Blank Electronic Form used to collect Categorical Age**

Electronic Form

Categorical Age
(select one)

Figure 5:   **Blank Electronic Form used to collect Categorical Age, pull-down menu enabled**
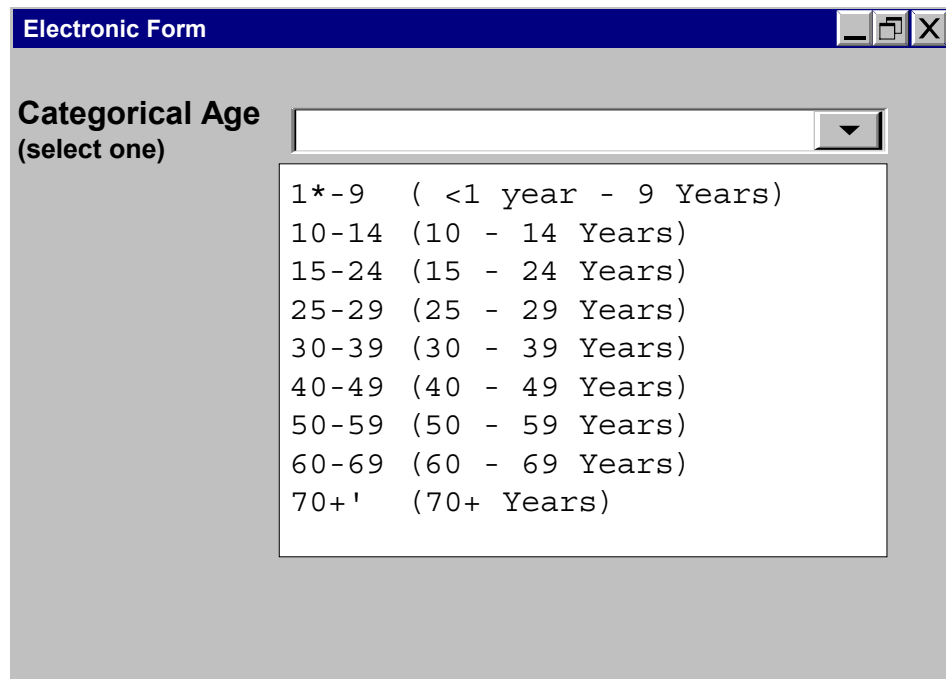
Electronic Form

Categorical Age
(select one)

```
 1*    (Less than 1 Year)
 1-4   (1 - 4 Years)
 5-9   (5 - 9 Years)
10-14 (10 - 14 Years)
15-19 (15 - 19 Years)
20-24 (20 - 24 Years)
25-29 (25 - 29 Years)
30-34 (30 - 34 Years)
35-39 (35 - 39 Years)
40-44 (40 - 44 Years)
45-49 (45 - 49 Years)
50-54 (50 - 54 Years)
55-59 (55 - 59 Years)
60-64 (60 - 64 Years)
65-69 (65 - 69 Years)
70-74 (70 - 74 Years)
75-79 (75 - 79 Years)
80-84 (80-84 Years)
85-89 (85 - 89 Years)
90+   (90+ Years)
```

Figure 6:   **Blank Electronic Form used to collect Categorical Age, pull-down menu enabled.**
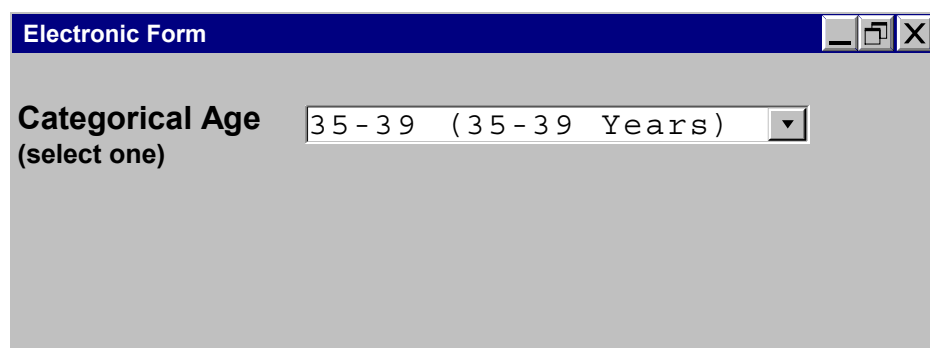This example illustrates CIPHER's flexibility in allowing the use of alternate categories that reflect an expansion of the standard CIPHER categories.

```
Electronic Form                                    _ ⊡ X

Categorical Age      [                        ] [▼]
(select one)
                     ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                     │ 1*-9  ( <1 year - 9 Years)    │
                     │ 10-14 (10 - 14 Years)         │
                     │ 15-24 (15 - 24 Years)         │
                     │ 25-29 (25 - 29 Years)         │
                     │ 30-39 (30 - 39 Years)         │
                     │ 40-49 (40 - 49 Years)         │
                     │ 50-59 (50 - 59 Years)         │
                     │ 60-69 (60 - 69 Years)         │
                     │ 70+'  (70+ Years)             │
                     │                               │
                     └──────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 7:   **Completed Electronic Form used to collect Categorical Age**

```
Electronic Form                                    _ ⊡ X

Categorical Age      [35-39  (35-39 Years)    ] [▼]
(select one)
```

Missing Values – Electronic Form

Examples of electronic forms using the associated Missing Value Reason (MVR) data element can be found in Appendix I – Missing Value Reason. The electronic form needs to handle the Missing Value Reason only if the program requires the rationale for a missing value for Categorical Age. If the user selects a missing value reason code during data entry, the Categorical Age field will be blank and the screen will display the MVR information next to the blank field.

Data Processing: Validations and Edit Checks

Data elements entered in the electronic form will be edited as outlined below. If the program elects to use an associated Missing Value Reason data element for Categorical Age, it will be edited as outlined in Appendix I – Missing Value Reason.

Categorical Age:
- Alpha only
- Categorical Age code sets are 6 characters in length. Code sets are right justified and filled with blanks to insure proper sort order.
- An asterisk (*) is used in the code set to represent "less than" within that category.

Data Processing: From Hardcopy to Storage

The following example illustrates the flow of information from data collection on the hardcopy form, to data entry into the electronic form, to validations and storage in the database.

The process begins with the blank Hardcopy data collection form used to collect Categorical Age:

The Categorical Age information is captured on the form, creating a completed Hardcopy data collection form:

The process continues with a blank Electronic form/data entry screen used to capture Categorical Age:

The value from the hardcopy form is entered into the Electronic form/data entry screen with the use of drop-down lists of valid values, and then the edits and validations are performed on Categorical Age:

The completed Electronic form/data entry screen is redisplayed and Categorical Age is stored in the database:

Electronic Form

Categorical Age
(select one)   35-39 (35-39 Years) ▾

Database Storage

Variable: *AGECAT*
Type: character
Length: 5
Stored Value: **' 35-39'**

Data Transmission: Electronic Data Interchange

Note: EDI sections are under construction.